



VC's VOICE



SUPPORTING THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

Youth Month, June 2021, was the month Nelson Mandela University launched its vaccination programme and we hope this will be remembered as a critical moment in the ongoing battle we are jointly fighting to turn the tide against the COVID-19 pandemic.

The University joined the [national vaccination rollout](#) from 14 June 2021 after approval as a Master Facility COVID-19 Vaccination Site by the Eastern Cape Department of Health (ECDoH). This means we have also been able to contribute by vaccinating members of the public, and in a short space of time the [COVID-19 Vaccination Hub](#) has become a popular – and much praised – destination for the procedure.

Vaccination is a key element in preventing ongoing transmission of the coronavirus and in saving lives. The vaccines presented at Mandela Uni offer protection against getting seriously ill or dying from COVID-19. It has thus been exciting to join hands in ensuring that our institution offers this essential service not only to our staff and students but also to our surrounding community.

This aligns well with the University's ongoing externally focused efforts, in collaboration with provincial government, private sector and civil society organisations, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as an engaged institution in the service of society.

Mandela University supports the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and encourages vaccination. If you are still unsure of vaccination, rest assured it is a simple procedure: [watch our vaccination journey video](#).

It became clear, as Mandela and sister universities began experiencing rising infections, that containing the spread of the virus on campuses would not be successful without containing the virus in communities and broader society.

We are in this together because, if I am not safe, you are not safe; and if Africa is not safe, then the rest of the world is not safe. It will take a collaborative effort to safeguard the world – and that collaboration starts with you and me.

By 18 November, our own professional nursing staff had given 16795 vaccinations – 2244 for staff, 5033 for students and 9501 to the public. At the latest count, 65% of staff were fully vaccinated, with 5% awaiting their second dose. The overall statistics for students was not available because the University does not have direct access to the Electronic Data Vaccination System (EDVS).

In line with the national drive, we started with the over 60s, followed by the over 50s and then the 35 to 49-age group and the 18-34 group. The most recent cohort is the 12-17 group. It was moving to hear the cheers all round when the vaccines arrived as part of phase two of the national vaccination programme.

The University has been planning for this moment for almost a year as we realised much earlier on that the pandemic was going to be extraordinarily disruptive to



higher and other educational institutions in ways not seen in decades.

We understood and learnt very quickly that overcoming the pandemic is not only going to be a gargantuan task – it is also going to require mobilising partnerships, not only outside the University, but also within.

Members of the public have praised our staff for their polite and professional service, and in June an [SABC television crew](#) covered the centre's work. However, special thanks must go to staff involved with the vaccination drive as their duties have been over and above their normal day-to-day responsibilities. For that, we would like to express our gratitude.

This gratitude extends not only to our Occupational and Student Health team members, but also to our Safety Health and Environment staff, security personnel, and others. The University's facilities are well equipped and well organised under the leadership of the respective health and supporting

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teams.

Internally, we have been sharing news and information on the vaccination rollout with staff and students in our [VAX FAX Conversations](#) webinar series. [Watch an overview of our procedure](#)

Operating from 9am to 3pm from Mondays to Thursdays, and from 9am to 12 noon on Fridays (closed over weekends), we are consistently adapting processes to provide a smooth, COVID-19 compliant vaccination journey.

The University is also taking the vaccine to students as part of its strategy in addressing the low uptake nationally among the 18 to 34-year age group. The Student Health team has been taking the vaccine to student residences.

George Campus is operating as a satellite vaccination site, opening its doors to students, staff and the public every Tuesday.





LOOKING OUT FOR EACH OTHER

This has been a difficult and daunting time, but our institution's community spirit – our foundation of ubuntu – has helped us to weather the storm. Mandela University is not only a place of learning, but also a space for living, and this means that a firm commitment to your health and wellbeing has, and will continue to be, our top priority.

We celebrate your courage and conviction in facing challenge after challenge during the global coronavirus pandemic, which has hit so close to home.

We know that, just as our students have been struggling to manage their time, balancing academic requirements while dealing with the ongoing psychosocial challenges, many of our staff also are experiencing wellness challenges.

Constantly adapting our working and personal lives in the midst of crisis has certainly not been easy.

We are acutely aware of the psychological and emotional toll on each and every one of you.

For this reason, we have dedicated, and easy-to-access, support services (these are on the portals – not accessing outside the uni) available to our whole Mandela University family – and we are pleased to see that these resources are being used.

Wellness@work

Our Wellness@work team, for example, has noted and is responding to a critical need for staff support. It has seen an influx of requests for counselling services via the Care Centre for Support, which assists with a range of emotional concerns, ranging from COVID trauma and anxiety to work stress and depression. Most counselling is mask-to-mask.

[Student Health Services](#) and [Emthonjeni Wellness Centre](#) have seen an increasing number of mental health cases and are making a collective effort to address this.

With traditional, face-to-face support affected by lockdown measures, Emthonjeni Student Wellness (ESW) transformed rapidly to enable online service delivery for both individuals and groups. As restrictions have eased, ESW has adopted a hybrid approach, offering valuable support both in-person and online.

Group sessions are offered to both staff and students in the form of webinars, posters, memos, Facebook and Instagram posts and other social media target streams.

Informing and supporting staff

The pandemic increasingly also shows how critical it is to keep students and staff well informed, and attention needs to be given to whether and how workload models for academics need to be adapted.

Faculty staff have made big strides over 20 months to implement our multi-layered, staggered blended learning approach. However, the move to online and continuous assessment was challenging for many staff as they grappled with the social and emotional challenges of the virus, as well as adapting to working remotely. In addition, load-shedding and connectivity continue to hamper learning and teaching in the digital world. We are working hard to make the online space humanising and are focusing on social presence to create more personal connections.

For managers and staff, our webinars on effective remote working helped provide guidelines and support while working remotely or in a hybrid system.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

We take wellness seriously, and in times such as these, it is more important than ever to know that you have support – and that help is just a person, phone call, WhatsApp or email away.

During this trying period of social distancing, upheaval and uncertainty, we echo that sentiment: you are not alone.

Together, we will safely navigate this new world, one helping hand at a time.

Between November 2020 and May this year, 217 people attended webinars and 640 participants used the complementary Moodle site.

The Human Resources Directorate and Engagement and Transformation Portfolio office have also co-developed a wellness survey focusing on Burnout and Resilience. It will help us to determine the impact of COVID-19 on University staff, and on the work that we do.



MEDICAL SCHOOL – A DREAM REALISED

It gives great joy to report that Nelson Mandela University's new [Medical School](#) welcomed its first class of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB) students in March this year. When the 50 students in this initial cohort stepped on to Missionvale Campus, it was the fulfilment of a decades-long dream not only for the University, but also for the area around this campus, our city and province.

On 30 November we will officially launch and celebrate this achievement.

It has also been gratifying to see the demand for our new programme. Interest has been far-reaching and, by the time applications had closed on June 30 for the 2022 intake of 80 students, the University had received more than 4000 applications.

Our programme is unique in South Africa, as it is a comprehensive approach that focuses on the four pillars of medicine: disease prevention, health promotion, treatment and rehabilitative medicine. The Medical School's strong community-based approach is aimed at graduating socially conscious medical doctors who can compete globally, but who also have a deep passion to change the lives of poor communities.

In April, we were able to welcome the new medical students at a [small, internal oath taking ceremony](#) on the Missionvale Campus. Sophisticated facilities, up-to-date technology, a small class, helpful staff and top-notch training are among the reasons our students have given for enjoying their course.

In line with the primary health-care orientation of their course, students almost immediately start to interact with members of the surrounding areas – which in our case, means the townships and suburbs of Missionvale, Govan Mbeki, Zwide, Chatty, Gelvandale and West End. These community visits orient our students and remind them that they are part of a University in the



service of society, particularly as it relates to equality and social justice, inclusive of access to good health care. We hope to launch the Medical School before the end of the year.

Careful attention has been given to the resource-constrained environment in which the University operates, and the Faculty of Health Sciences focused on [renovating and upgrading existing facilities](#) at Missionvale Campus and Dora Nginza hospital.

Our medical school is using global technology for interactive anatomical education, radiology, surgery and research. Missionvale Campus security upgrades are complete and further funding will be invested as part of the University's safety and security implementation plan, and to improve the water and electricity challenges, which will in turn also benefit the surrounding community.

We envisage that the Medical School will be a catalyst for change in the surrounding townships. Urban renewal also will benefit the surrounding community through delivering health services to underserved areas.

This is a historic milestone as we look forward to collaborating with all our partners, internally and externally, in producing fit-for-purpose, service-oriented and civic-minded medical professionals committed to making a difference in the lives of the disadvantaged.

We would like to thank Faculty of Health Sciences Acting Dean Professor Dalena van Rooyen, who stepped into the breach when Executive Dean, Professor Lungile Pepeta, passed away in August last year. We also welcome Professor Zukiswa Zingela, who joined the University as Faculty of Health Sciences Executive Dean on 1 August.

CANRAD: 10 YEARS OF ADVANCING NON-RACIALISM AND DEMOCRACY

The Centre for the Advancement of Non-Racialism and Democracy (CANRAD) celebrated its 10-year anniversary with an International Interdisciplinary Conference, "The State We're In: Democracy's Fractures, Fixes and Futures" in September. The focus was on thinking through democracy to strengthen the system in the face of anti-democratic forces rising across the globe.

Co-hosted by the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Engagement and Transformation and the Faculty of Humanities, this conference critically interrogated the state of democracy in South Africa and globally.

Soberingly, we note that 2021 marks a decade since CANRAD started its mission to advance its twin goals of non-racialism and democracy, and two decades since the UN World Conference Against Racism was held in South Africa. However, our country and the world continue to suffer the material effects of racial constructions. Racism continuously, and daily, remains a challenge, making the mandate of CANRAD as vital today as it was then.

CANRAD director Allan Zinn has been a stalwart at this entity since its inception and the timing of this conference is apt, not only marking the milestone of a decade of CANRAD's existence within the University, but also as an ideal space for us to consider and think through democracy – its forms, its applications, and its futures.

Thanks also go to convenor and programme director Prof Christi van der Westhuizen, CANRAD Head of Research, who assembled a stellar line-up of 64 speakers. The four-day conference, held virtually due to COVID-19,

was very well attended, with almost 330 delegates representing 19 countries and 45 universities or organisations.

"The State We're In" conference tied in with Nelson Mandela University's focus as an African university. It also highlighted our strategic trajectory of Revitalising the Humanities by featuring a wide range of transdisciplinary themes.

Scholars in Political Studies, Law, Sociology, Queer Studies, Feminist and Gender Studies, African Studies, and related fields presented their work, or attended, with keynote speakers including Prof Mahmood Mamdani (Universities of Columbia and Makerere), Prof William Gumede (University of the Witwatersrand) and Prof Karin van Marle (University of the Free State).

Creating a layered, global conversation was further made possible by bringing in scholars from Ethiopia to Uganda to Zimbabwe, ensuring a strong African focus, while also engaging participants from India, Northern Ireland, Slovakia, Brazil, the United States of America, and Qatar.

Renewed thinking is necessary to deepen democracy, and address its contradictions and limitations. The work of entities such as CANRAD contribute to us finding ways to make democracy live up to its promise of equality, freedom, accountability and, above all, human dignity.

We wish it and its stakeholders well for another decade ahead.

To listen to the recordings, [click here](#) or visit CANRAD's YouTube channel or Facebook page.



SENIOR APPOINTMENTS

A number of senior appointments, some of them in newly created posts, have recently been made as part of the University's Organisational Redesign process to actively drive and transform the institution to be more effective and effective in line with its strategic priorities.



Professor Pamela Maseko
EXECUTIVE DEAN,
FACULTY OF
HUMANITIES

Professor Pamela Maseko joined the Faculty of Humanities on 1 February. Previously Professor in Sociolinguistics and Executive Dean of Humanities at North West University, Prof Maseko brings with her a wealth of experience in academic leadership, learning and teaching, scholarly and creative research, and engagement.

While in her previous position as senior lecturer in African Language Studies, Prof Maseko co-ordinated multilingualism projects for the National Language Project and [South Africa Norway Tertiary Education Development Programme \(SANTED\)](#) at Rhodes and at the University of Cape Town.

She has extensive experience in developing and building partnerships to foster humanities-focused knowledge exchange, and enjoys a national and international reputation as a scholar. She has taught, published and collaborated widely in the fields of sociolinguistics, identity politics, the historiography of isiXhosa literature, and applied language studies.

Passionate about languages and how their use in education can either help or hinder learners from performing exceptionally, Prof Maseko's sociolinguistics studies have a critical focus on how languages have been organised in this country. This resonates with the faculty's focus on engendering a humanising pedagogy, to equip graduates to meet the ethical, social and political challenges encountered in a rapidly changing South Africa and world at large.



Dr Phumeza Kota-Nyati
DEAN: LEARNING
AND TEACHING

Dr Phumeza Kota-Nyati has been appointed as the Dean: Learning and Teaching from 1 July 2021. She will be responsible for leading the work of the LT Collab, conceptualising and implementing key strategies to enable success and development for students and staff.

Dr Kota-Nyati is not a newcomer to our University as, before taking up the dean's position, she served as Director of [Emthonjeni Student Wellness](#). Her lecturing career spans 12 years at the University of Port Elizabeth, Vista University, and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, and she has been registered as a Counselling Psychologist since 1999.

Her experience within the different fields of Psychology ranges from employee assistance work and HIV coordination (NMBM), student counselling services (CPUT), Human Resources (Telkom SA), student development (Coega Development Corporation) and private practice.

"As we move our learning and teaching agenda forward in a volatile and complex environment, we need to continually reflect on our practices and advance towards transformative learning and teaching," she says. "We might need to be disruptive, allowing for critical evaluation, exploring varied ways of awareness raising, knowing, and doing. As co-constructors in learning and teaching we will achieve success when we take our students and colleagues along with us in the spirit of collaboration."



Professor Zukiswa Zingela
EXECUTIVE DEAN,
FACULTY OF
HEALTH SCIENCES

Professor Zukiswa Zingela became the Executive Dean of Health Sciences from 1 August. A psychiatrist, Prof Zingela is an experienced healthcare practitioner and scholar with international experience and is part of a collaborative scholarly network in Africa and elsewhere. She has worked in both the public and private sectors in South Africa and in the United Kingdom.

She joins us from her last position as Associate Professor and Head of Department (Chair) of Psychiatry and Behavioural Sciences at Walter Sisulu University and Clinical Head at Nelson Mandela Academic Hospital in Mthatha. Her roles included clinical, academic and research responsibilities for mental health services across the Eastern Cape province and strategic leadership to improve mental health services.

Her academic responsibilities included teaching and supervision of undergraduate medical students and postgraduate students in Psychiatry. As a clinician researcher, her areas of work included mental illness and HIV, the use of traditional healers in psychiatry, blueprinting of a medical school for the Eastern Cape, substance use and mental illness and neuropsychiatric conditions.

Our thanks go to Prof Dalena van Rooyen who, as Acting Dean, has been standing in the deeply felt gap left by the death of the late Prof Lungile Pepeta in August 2020.



Lutho Nduvane
SENIOR DIRECTOR:
SUPPORT SERVICES

Lutho Nduvane, appointed as Senior Director: Support Services from 1 February 2021, re-joined Nelson Mandela University after an absence of 14 years to contribute towards building an efficient, innovative and resilient academic institution in the 21st Century.

Mr Nduvane takes up the new position, created as part of the Organisational Redesign process, to align the University's structures with its strategic priorities, as the institution prepares to play a critical and substantive role in society, nationally, continentally and beyond.

The experienced administrator was most recently head of Trade and Investment in the [Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality Economic Development Directorate](#). His experience in higher education began at the former Vista University and PE Technikon as a student advisor before becoming Interim Director: Student Governance at the former NMMU. He was later recruited to join government (DEDEAT) as a Chief Director to manage the merger of the Eastern Cape Parks Board and Eastern Cape Tourism Board into the current Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency. He has also served as Chief Director of Public Entities Oversight and Intergovernmental relations.

Mr Nduvane holds a Master's in Social Change and Development from the University of Newcastle, Australia, and is studying for his MPhil in Development Finance at Mandela University.



Sharon Masiza
SENIOR DIRECTOR:
MISSIONVALE,
BIRD STREET AND
SECOND AVENUE
CAMPUSES

Management, operations and industrial engineering specialist Ms Sharon Masiza has been appointed as Senior Director: Missionvale, Bird Street and Second Avenue Campuses with effect from 1 June 2021. This new post will provide leadership to all three campuses as part of our organisational redesign.

Ms Masiza's mandate is that of leading, creating and maintaining a conducive and enabling environment for students and staff on these campuses for the academic project to proceed effectively and efficiently, in line with the University's strategic objectives, vision and mission.

Mandela University alumnus Ms Masiza joins the institution from Diageo South Africa in Durban, where she was Production Executive from April 2019. Before that she worked as the Packaging Plant Manager at Tongaat Hulett Sugar Refinery and as Manufacturing Manager of Candy and Assortments Factory, Port Elizabeth, at the Kraft Foods/Mondelez International (previously Cadbury SA) site. Her earlier career years were spent at the National Productivity Institute and the SA Post Office.

Ms Masiza holds, among others, a Master's degree in Business Administration (MBA) as well as a National Diploma in Industrial Engineering from the-then PE Technikon, now Nelson Mandela University.

A HUMAN-CENTRED APPROACH

As one of our key strategic trajectories, the Revitalisation of the humanities continues to develop its intellectual culture through seminars and discussions. Research entities are driving the research agenda, with an attempt to locate each entity in a School in the Faculty of Humanities for conceptual affiliation. This model is aimed at establishing analytical rigour, vibrancy and cohesion across the Faculty.

The [Hubs of Convergence](#), in one such instance, is collaborating with the Faculty of Humanities' Language and Literature Department to explore how to diversify the languages used in our communication approaches. As a hub of Knowledge Communication and Application, this includes a partnership with the Graphic Design, History, and Architecture departments where academics and students will pilot exploratory transdisciplinary collaborations to reframe and steer the curriculum towards greater stakeholder-community engagement.

The [Centre for Women and Gender Studies](#) (CWGS) spearheaded the celebration of 150 years of Charlotte Maxeke's idea and life in collaboration with the Chair in African Feminist Imaginations, the Charlotte Maxeke Institute, and the Charlotte Maxeke Residence. The CWGS hosted a month-long [national webinar series](#)

which attracted notable women across the continent. The National Research Foundation SARCHI Chair on African Feminist Imaginations in August launched one of its first research outputs, the book *Female Fear Factory* by Chair Prof Pumla Gqola.

Work in other entities is also ongoing, such as the [Transdisciplinary Institute for Mandela Studies](#) (TIMS) which hosted a workshop in the second quarter on shaping the expressions of meanings of Mandela within the University.

CIPSET's research work on the solidarity economy continues and it has co-hosted several webinars related to this project.

CrSHET, in collaboration with the Centre for Philosophy in Africa, the Faculty of Humanities, and the Emengini Institute for Comparative Global Studies, co-hosted the third Africa and Knowledge seminar (I can't find the recording of the seminar) where Prof Chielozona Eze spoke on "Nelson Mandela and the Topology of African Encounter with the World".

The Centre for the Advancement of Non-Racialism and Democracy (CANRAD) supported the national [Anti-Racist Network South Africa \(ARNSA\)](#) and the Israel Apartheid Week Campaign? It is also partnering with UNAKO to develop various youth development initiatives.

The Chair for Youth Unemployment, Employability and Empowerment has made significant progress on two big projects: the DHET TVET Colleges Research Programme? and developing a memorandum of understanding with DUOC Chile to build a partnership.

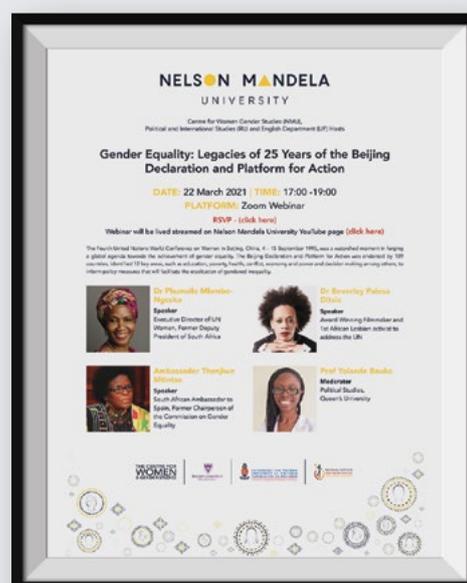
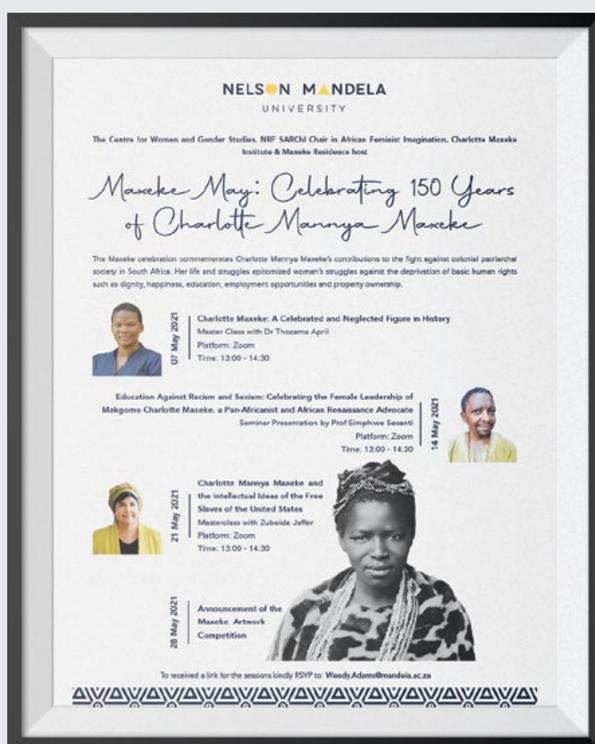
Alongside the focus on decoloniality, indigenous knowledges and interrogating Western hegemonies, other exciting new areas of study and research are emerging in the Faculty of Humanities itself, such as digital humanities and animation?.

The Professors Project, started in 2020, has research themes carefully framed around Faculty research priority areas related to the revitalisation of the humanities. The Raymond Mhlaba Centre has been revived and the proposed Professors, planned to be appointed in 2021, are:

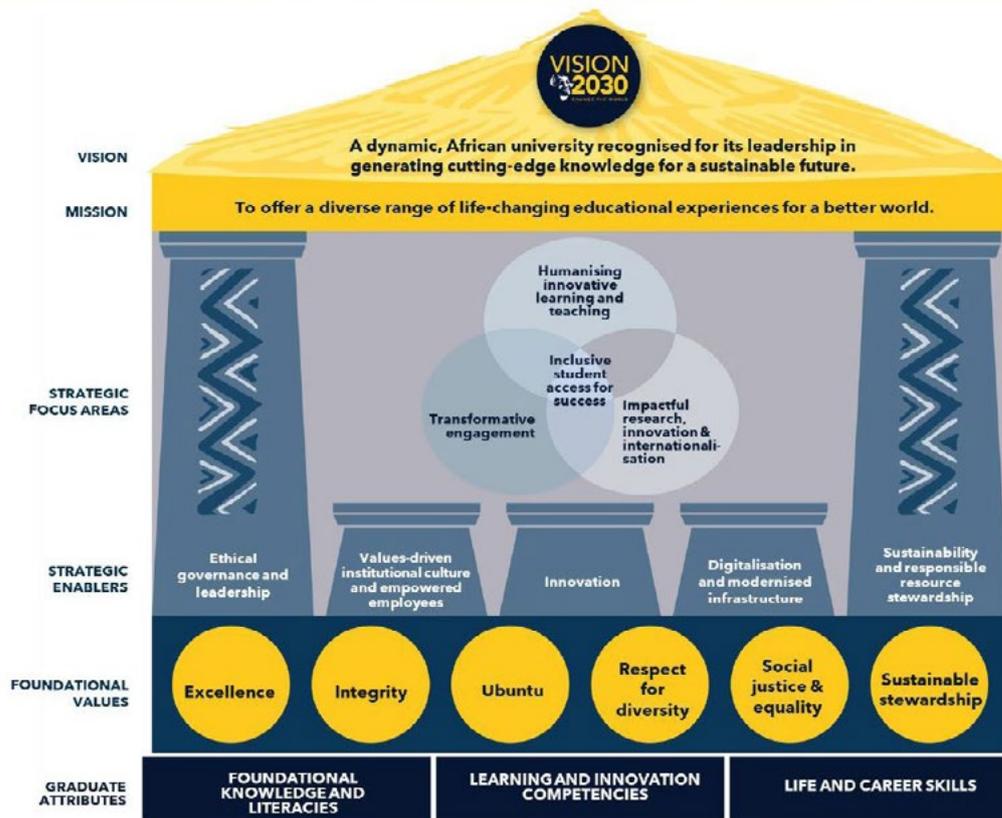
- African Archives and Digital Humanities
- Entrepreneurship and Innovation in the Arts and Humanities
- Philosophy in Africa, and
- Raymond Mhlaba Centre for Public Governance and Leadership.

Each School in the Faculty is also to host a Curriculum Revitalisation Conversation? as a reflective and reflexive process, and the School of Visual and Performing Arts hosted the first event in May.

“ The Centre for Women and Gender Studies (CWGS) spearheaded the celebration of 150 years of Charlotte Maxeke's idea and life in collaboration with the Chair in African Feminist Imaginations, the Charlotte Maxeke Institute, and the Charlotte Maxeke Residence. ”



Vision 2030 strategic framework



OUR VISION 2030 – A UNIVERSITY IN SERVICE OF SOCIETY

After extensive engagements with staff, students, alumni and external stakeholders, Council approved our Vision 2030 strategy on 25 March 2021. Thanks go to all those who contributed by participating in various inputs, starting with the Vice-Chancellor’s Listening Campaign in 2018 and culminating in a stakeholder mapping exercise earlier this year.

Other strategic milestones that have significantly shaped its content include the launch of the new name and strategic repositioning of the University, a comprehensive review of the Vision 2020, and the organisational redesign of 2020. Multiple submissions have gone towards crafting this institutional strategy, and the result is a diversity of voices. We are now in the position that Vision 2030 will be implemented through two cycles of five-year rolling strategic plans from 2021-2025 and 2026-2030.

The core purpose at the apex of Vision 2030 is that we are a university in service of society, striving to create a sustainable, socially just world. This purpose drives the agenda of our four strategic focus areas: Learning and Teaching; Research, Innovation and Internationalisation; Transformative Engagement, and student-centric approaches for access and success.

The University’s Vision 2030 strategy is an articulation of our strategic intentions and aspirations as we seek to embody the soul of Mandela through life-changing, student-centric educational opportunities, innovative research, and transformative engagement that contributes to socially just and sustainable futures.

Nelson Mandela, the figure, remains a commanding, and unparalleled presence. Taking on the responsibility

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of bearing this name means that our articulation of the foundational scholarly mission of a public university is aligned to the distinct iconic brand of Madiba, and more broadly, his vision and values of a free, equal and democratic world.

For the past few years, we have been mobilising our academic and social project to align to this vision. Notable projects of the University speak to this notion, such as the Medical School, which is located within a paradigm of primary health and public health. It is deliberately “placed” within, and working directly with, precarious communities, and poised to make a tangible impact on healthcare in the province and country.

Our research programmes are now also oriented towards supporting the SA National Development Plan, Africa Agenda 2063, and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We strive to do this systematically through the vehicle of our institutional research themes.

The contribution of every individual will be important, and we need to join hands in ensuring that our institutional culture creates an affirming and inclusive lived experience for all. As we prepare to cascade the decadal plan into all faculties and support service divisions, your active engagement in and support of these processes will be crucial for the successful implementation of Vision 2030.

Please take the time to visit the [dedicated site](#) on our web portals, where you can read more on the strategy and other supporting documents. The Office for Institutional Strategy is also available in an advisory capacity to support efforts to align faculty, divisional and campus strategic plans with Vision 2030.